***Under the Mesquite***

by Guadalupe Garcia McCall

Booktalk by Stephanie Hatley

The stubborn, thorny, mesquite tree insisted on growing in the middle of Mami’s prized rose garden.

*Even after she has pulled it out*

*by its roots repeatedly,*

*prickling herself on its thorns each time,*

*it keeps growing back.*

So does the cancer.

Lupita was born in Mexico, but her parents moved their family to *los Estados Unidos* when she was six years old. Now a high school student in the border town of Eagle Pass, Lupita straddles two worlds- enjoying the simple pleasures of her ancestral home on visits to Coahuila and the modern conveniences of her home in Texas. She must find balance between the two as she holds on to her rich Mexican culture while eliminating her Spanish accent for drama class.

The eldest of eight children, Lupita’s life is full- full of responsibility for her younger siblings, but also full of love. However, the close-knit Mexican American family is put to the test when Mami is diagnosed with cancer. That stubborn mesquite tree becomes the refuge Lupita seeks, writing poetry in its shade, desperately searching for words to heal the pain she carries.